

There are thousands of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, FLEOs, including those that bravely serve in the Department of Homeland Security. Of these thousands, some are injured in the course of duty. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to these individuals, especially given the difficult task they have of enforcing our laws and protecting our way of life.

In the Department of Homeland Security alone, countless FLEOs serve to protect the Nation from harm at our borders and ports of entry as well as our financial, cyber and transportation systems. On a daily basis, these individuals work diligently, often apprehending or detaining people suspected of criminal offenses, even if it means putting themselves in harm's way. Their work is absolutely necessary to the security and well-being of our country and it should be properly acknowledged.

While measures exist to award military personnel and State and local officers for their sacrifices, currently only 2 out of the more than 70 Federal agencies recognize their own valiant FLEOs. Therefore, it is imperative that Congress address and highlight the value of these distinguished men and women by establishing a Congressional Badge of Bravery. I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE VIRGINIA TECH COMMUNITY

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, today we remember and honor the students and faculty who lost their lives a year ago at Virginia Tech. The entire community has made a valiant effort to move forward while still honoring those who were lost and injured on that fateful day. As a proud alumnus of Virginia Tech this day has very personal meaning to my family and me. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims and the entire Hokie family today.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING COACH DAN McCAULEY FOR COACHING THE TUSCARAWAS COUNTY ROCKETS SPECIAL OLYMPICS BASKETBALL TEAM TO WINNING THE OHIO DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Coach Dan McCauley showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Dan McCauley was a leader and mentor for the Tuscarawas County Rockets Special Olympics Basketball Team; and

Whereas, Coach McCauley has been a role model for sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that along with his friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Coach Dan McCauley for leading the Tuscarawas County Rockets Special Olympics Basketball Team to winning the Ohio Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and leadership he has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 Basketball season.

THE DAILY 45: CHAVEZ CLARKE

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, everyday, 45 people, on average, are fatally shot in the United States. Sadly enough, one of the victims on March 29 was eighteen-year-old Chavez Clarke. This Chicago student was gunned down after Saturday classes at Simeon Career Academy, where Clarke was attending in hopes of graduating this summer.

One teenage gunman brought a gun to school because he knew security would be light, police said. Clarke's classmates were outraged. On April 1—instead of playing April Fool's Day pranks—three hundred anti-violence activists and Chicago Public Schools students joined local leaders in their fight for gun control.

If we, as adults, parents, and legislators don't hear the cries of our children, then, WE are the fools. Americans of conscience must come together to stop the senseless death of "The Daily 45." When will Americans say "enough is enough, stop the killing!"

VIRGINIA TECH ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 1-year anniversary of the tragic shooting at Virginia Tech University.

Madam Speaker, today, April 16, 2008, marks one of the darkest days in our Nation's history. A year ago today, 32 innocent lives were mercilessly cut short in their prime. A year ago today, families and friends lost their loved ones in a crime of unspeakable horror. A year ago today, we, the American people once again lost a piece of ourselves and our sense of security.

These poor people. Their poor families. These were real people that were killed. They were our sons and daughters. This was our American family that was impacted on April 16, 2007.

The shooting at Virginia Tech was the deadliest school shooting ever seen on our soil.

Far too many times we have stood here in this Chamber commemorating days like today. Days when we reflect on what evil can come to bear on good people and we make grand proclamations about how we will do everything we can to make sure that it will never happen again. Never again.

And here we are—again.

The cynics among us will no doubt throw their hands up in the air and claim that this is just the way things are. What can we do?

Can we ever stop these nightmares from happening in the first place, so we don't have to hear about another life needlessly lost? The answer is most likely an unsettling no.

The fact is that someday, somewhere, despite all of our best efforts, we will probably come together again sometime down the line and we will deliver similar speeches and we will once again feel the helpless confusion that we have become so uneasily and reluctantly accustomed to.

No, we can't say that there will never be another shooting of major proportions like the one at Virginia Tech, but we can say that we will do everything in our power to close any loophole we can find that would make it easier for another individual to commit such a heinous crime.

We have made strides in the right direction. In January, this Congress passed and the President signed into law the National Instant Criminal Background Check System Improvement Amendments Act.

This bill was a step in the right direction toward keeping guns out of the hands of the people who stand to do the most harm with them. In fact, based on his diagnosed mental illness, it is possible that the killer, Mr. Cho, might not have been able to acquire the weapons he used on his murderous rampage.

We can and will save lives as a result of the mechanisms put in place through the passage of this legislation. But in order for the Improvements to NICS to be truly effective, we must make sure that this Congress steps up to the plate and appropriately funds the legislation that we all supported. This measure is too important to play politics with, and I call on my colleagues to stand with me and do the right thing by fully funding the NICS Improvement Amendments Act.

But beyond keeping guns out of the wrong hands, we need to make sure that systems are in place that will keep our Nation's college campuses safe.

Last week I stood with the families of Virginia Tech victims and announced the introduction of the "Virginia Tech Victims Campus Emergency Response Policy and Notification Act," H.R. 5735, also known as the VTV Act.

The bill amends the Jean Clery Act and requires schools to provide warnings within 30 minutes after campus or local law enforcement officials have determined there is an emergency or dangerous situation on campus.

Had Virginia Tech quickly warned students that there was a gunman on campus when first two murders were confirmed, many of the victims may have sought shelter or stayed put. Instead, people went about their normal day with no knowledge of the danger they were about to encounter.

No notifications were sent until 9:26 a.m., when the school emailed students that there was a shooting, and to watch for suspicious behavior. At 9:45 a.m., the second round of shootings occurred. But by that time, students had already gone to their classes.

Many believe if the students had been notified earlier, they might not have gone to class and some might not have been exposed to the shooter.

If the warnings required by the VTV Act were in place on April 16, 2007, lives might have been saved.